00043453

821.91
Noy/Ope
43453

Digitized with financial assistance from

H T Parekh FOUNDATION

An Initiative by HDFC WITH YOU, RIGHT THROUGH

on 15 October, 2018

OPEN BOATS

OPEN BOATS

43453
a

BY

ALFRED NOYES

AUTHOR OF 'DRAKE: AN ENGLISH EPIC,' ETC., ETC.

William Blackwood and Sons
Edinburgh and London
1917

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

P21.C1
M9161
43453

00043453

I.

OPEN BOATS.

I.

THE ebb and flow of this war necessarily pass beyond the range of any man's vision. From incidents that we are able to visualise completely—the solitary spar tossed up by the wave—we obtain clues to the moving epic beyond our ken. One mutilated face tells us more than all the swarming casualty columns; and a little wreckage touches the whole Atlantic with tragedy.

For intense drama, doubly significant

adventure is fraught with more pity and terror.

The provision made by international law for the safety of passengers and crews of merchant ships, belligerent or neutral, has proved to be as ready an instrument of frightfulness as the provision devised to protect sleeping children in open cities from midnight murder. Circumstances are always found to justify whatever the law-breaker may desire to do. If he desires to put men, women, and children into open boats a hundred miles from land in a comparatively calm sea, it is obviously not his fault that—six hours later—a storm should rise and trample them under. He has left them at all distances from land, some only a few miles, and others many score, in the

Mediterranean and in the Atlantic. He attacked the *Umeta* without warning, and one of her crowded open boats was left adrift in the depth of winter, from the 1st to the 5th of December. One man died of thirst and exposure. How many people realise the full horror of that simple fact?

Hitherto the shipwrecked crew in an open boat out of sight of land has been the first elementary object-lesson in pity to the human race. Thousands of British seamen every year have risked their lives to save their brothers and sisters from the slow agonies of that fate. In the last two years of grace, under the wings of the new civilisation, heralded by a thousand perverse forms of new art and new thought, it has become an act of benevo-

lence to inflict this punishment upon thousands of innocent victims.

Indeed, the "open boat" atrocities, taken all together, present as serious a problem to the civilised world as the deportations in Belgium and France. And they are increasing.

The tale of the *Cottingham* is a typical one. She was owned in Glasgow, rigged as a fore-and-aft schooner, built of steel at Goole, and bound from Rouen to Swansea. On Sunday, the 26th December, at 4 o'clock in the afternoon, with a south-west wind blowing and a choppy sea, she was about sixteen miles south-west of Lundy Island south light, and sailing at about eight and a half knots. Without any warning, a shell passed directly over the vessel, and the report

of a gun was heard. Looking astern, the master saw the periscope and conning-tower of a submarine dead in the wake of the ship, about a mile distant. The *Cottingham* kept on her course. A second shell went over, and the submarine began to overhaul the ship very rapidly, coming up on the starboard quarter. A signal was now seen flying on the submarine—"Abandon ship"—and a third shell struck the *Cottingham* on the starboard bow.

The engines were stopped, and all hands were called to the boats, which were promptly lowered. There were six men in the master's boat and seven men in that of the chief officer. This was about 4.30 P.M. The boats pulled away clear, while the shelling continued. There

were ten or twelve shells fired. Darkness was coming on, and the ship was not seen to sink.

The master's boat went away before the wind and sea, steering north-east. Signals by red lights were made to the other boat, which replied to two signals, but did not answer the third. The boats lost touch with each other about 6 o'clock. The master assumed, however, that the other boat was following the same course, and steered for Lundy Island. Lights were seen a few hours later, and signals were again made by red flares. The patrol boat *Soar* loomed up out of the dark, and the crew of the master's boat were taken aboard at 10.30 P.M.

The *Soar* then cruised round, searching the pitchy seas far and wide, but nothing

was seen of the other boat with the seven missing men.

The end of this brief summary of a thousand cases is told best, perhaps, in a telegram from St David's, and even the telegram suggests a second tragedy :—

> "Begins—Lifeboat named *Cottingham*, of Glasgow, washed ashore at Portliskey, bottom up, broke to pieces on rocks, also life-buoy marked s.s. Ministre Anvers. Ends."

The case of the *Diomed* would be pretty good evidence for the prosecution in that remote Court of International Law (at which most of us agree to scoff, and thereby lend immeasurable support to the tenets of Germany). The *Diomed* was a schooner of some 3000 tons, built of

steel at Greenock, and bound from Liverpool to Shanghai with a general cargo. On the 22nd of August, the weather being fine and clear, with a slight sea, she was sailing at full speed about thirty miles west of the Scilly Islands. At 9.45 A.M. a submarine was sighted about six miles distant on the port beam. The helm was ported at once, to bring the submarine astern.

At about 11.45 A.M. the submarine opened fire. She was then three miles away. The shots fell short till 1.45, when they began to fall ahead of the ship, and eventually to strike her. They struck her very systematically. First they smashed up the stern, then the fore-part of the ship, and then—lest any "place of safety" should remain—they began to break up

the bridge. The submarine flew no signals. The third steward was dropped in a red lump on the fore-part of the ship. The master and quartermaster were killed outright on the bridge, and the chief officer seriously wounded. The bridge now looked like a cross-section of a slaughter-house, and dripped with blood.

The second mate then ordered the ship to be stopped and abandoned, for she was obviously sinking. She carried four boats, of which the two on the port side had been smashed by shell fire, a matter into which submarines do not inquire too closely when they are committing the bodies of the living to the deep.

A steady pounding of this kind, however, with all its hideous accompaniment of wounds and death and bloody wreck-

age, induces haste in the hardiest of merchant crews. One of the two boats on the starboard side was "holed," but they did not notice it till after she was lowered, when, promptly filling up with good green sea-water and twenty floundering wild-eyed men, she capsized.

The crew swam round her, or clung to her sides, while the other starboard boat fought with its own difficulties. Just after it had reached the water, there was a violent explosion in the engine-room of the *Diomed*, which threw up a great wave, and half filled this boat also. The crew baled her as hastily as possible, in order to come to the rescue of the men in the sea. The maddening nightmare-like confusion of these moments can only be imagined.

At last they were able to pick up the

men who were swimming. Those who were clinging to the damaged boat were left, as they were "safe" for the time being. There were about thirty-four men in the undamaged boat.

All this time, it must be remembered, the *Diomed* was sinking. The men had hardly been taken from the water, when she went down with a rush. The waves closed over her, and these wrecked men were left alone with their enemies on the naked sea.

The submarine rendered them no help of any kind. The commander looked at the men in the water, and shook his fist at them, saying something in German. Then he closed the hatch, and the submarine submerged, leaving them to their own devices.

The second mate headed the undamaged boat for the Irish coast, and at about six o'clock in the evening he hailed a destroyer, which foamed through the dusk to the scene of the wreck. There, long after dark, they picked up the survivors on the capsized boat. But seven men had dropped off in sheer exhaustion, and had been drowned; and five of these were neutrals.

Few of us at home realise the intensity of this ocean drama, in which our merchant seamen, night and day, are risking their lives to keep our sea-roads open. A few lines of cold print can tell us very little by way of epitaph; and their hair-breadth escapes are, in the nature of things, hardly noted at all. Only by exploring incidental matters that are not

included in the published reports does one begin to realise that there are sea romances in the world around us surpassing anything that Hakluyt or Richard Eden ever knew. The tale of the unarmed *Anglo-Californian*, for instance, was illuminated for me by the exploration of a record of her wireless messages. These in themselves tell a tale which, in the days before the war, we should have dismissed as beyond the wildest dreams of melodrama.

The *Anglo-Californian* was homeward bound from Montreal to Avonmouth, with a cargo of 927 horses. She was chased and shelled by a submarine. She sent out wireless calls, and was answered by a man-of-war beyond the horizon.

The firing grew so hot that, when the

submarine signalled "Abandon ship," the captain decided to obey. He stopped the engines, and two boats were lowered. One was fired on, and both capsized.

A wireless message was then received telling the captain to hold on as long as possible, and he decided to go on again. He had some difficulty in persuading the firemen to go down below; but he was probably helped by the way in which the submarine had treated their "places of safety." As soon as the ship went on, the submarine opened fire on the bridge and boats. The captain and eight hands were killed; seven hands were badly wounded, and twenty horses were killed.

I shall not attempt to paint that picture —the smoke, the confusion, the changes of command, the concussions, the neigh-

ings of the horses, the pounding of the engines. But, with all that as a background, and the single statement that the wireless operator was in an exposed position just abaft the bridge, and remained at his post throughout, let the reader study for himself the amazing melodrama of this wireless conversation between the *Anglo-Californian* and the invisible man-of-war rushing up beyond the skyline.

"S.O.S., S.O.S., being chased by submarine, S.O.S. Position, latitude so and so N., longitude so and so W., steering so and so."

"Go ahead. He is being led a dance, and it is O.K. to work for a few minutes. Now altering course to south."

"Are you the *Cryptic?* He is rapidly overtaking us."

"Yes, steer so and so, and keep me informed."

"That is impossible. We are being fired on."

"Where is submarine?"

"Now astern."

"Endeavour to carry out instructions. Important."

"Can't. He is now on top of us, and I can hear his shots hitting us."

"On your port?"

"Submarine on top of us and hitting us. Captain says steering so and so. If he alters course will endanger ship."

"*Did you get message from* Cryptic?" This was an invisible destroyer speaking from a new point of the compass, forty miles away.

"Don't know who he is. Believe it is *Sphinx*."

"*No.* Cryptic *said something about approaching you.*"

"I can't hear him."

"Steer as much east as possible." This was *Cryptic* resuming her long-distance instructions and cross-examination with the calm of a doctor addressing a nervous patient.

"If we steer east we shall have submarine abeam. We can't do it."

"Please give *Cryptic* your speed."

"Twelve knots."

"Can see your smoke. Hold on. Funnel red and blue bands with yellow star. We are making your smoke."

"According to your position, I am nine miles off you."

"We are the *Anglo-Californian.*"
"Have you many passengers?"

"No. But we are 150 men on board. Crew."

"Please fire rocket to verify position. What is position of submarine?"

"Right astern, firing at wireless."

"Let me have your position frequently."

"Now firing our rockets. Submarine signals *Abandon vessel as soon as possible.*"

"As a last resource, can you ram? She will then give in. Can you see my smoke N.E. of you?"

"No. No. She is too close. We are stopped and blowing off."

It was at this point that the captain apparently wavered between abandoning his ship and going on. The reader will

note the subtle distinctions in the following dialogue—the *Anglo-Californian*, as an unarmed ship, being chiefly anxious to escape, while the man-of-war is anxious also to bag the submarine, if possible. The sea was still naked of help, though beyond the horizon the great ships were foaming up at full speed. It was the encouragement of the wireless rather than a faint wisp of smoke on the skyline that persuaded the captain to continue the struggle.

"Can see you distinctly," called the *Cryptic*. "Am about S.W. from you. Hold on."

"Yes, yes. He is running away."

"In what direction?"

"He is on the port side; we are between you and him. Hurry, hurry,

hurry, he is getting abeam to torpedo us."

"I am coming."

"We are keeping him astern now."

"O.K. Endeavour to keep his attention. You will be quite safe when——"

"Your signals are weak."

"How are you steering?"

"I can't find out how we are steering. It is zigzag."

"Tell captain to steer straight." (The zigzag course was wrong, as the submarine was astern.) "How many masts have you?"

"For God's sake hurry up. Firing like blazes."

"How many masts——?"

"Can't read you. Concussion."

"How many masts have you?"

"Two-two-one funnel. I see you on our port beam."

"O.K. Keep quiet, as though we were only coming to your assistance, and nothing else."

"Keeping him astern.. Hurry up."

"We are firing. Can you inform result?"

"Can hear you. Several being wounded. Shrapnel, I believe."

"Keep men below, or those on deck lie face down."

"All taking shelter in front of bridge-houses. He is firing shell."

"Have you two or four masts in all?"

"Two masts and one funnel."

"What speed?"

"Twelve, twelve, and submarine keeping pace. He is still very close, within

200 yards. Captain wants to know if you will fire to scare him?"

"Firing to scare him. Please head towards me."

"We can't. You are astern, and so is the submarine."

"Head for us in round about south. If submarine is only 200 yards astern, put ropes astern and tow in order to foul his propellers. Can you see my smoke?"

And again another ship anxiously repeats the question—"Cryptic *wants to know if you can see his smoke.*"

"Yes, yes, a long way off. Can see your smoke astern."

"What bearing? What has happened to you?"

"They can't tell what bearing. Now sinking."

"Are you torpedoed?"

"Not yet, but shots in plenty hitting. Broken glass all round me."

"Stick it, old man!"

"Yes, you bet. Say, the place stinks of gunpowder. Am lying on the floor."

"Nothing better, old man. Keep your pecker up, old man."

"Sure thing. Is there anything else coming to us, please?"

"Yes, I am *Cryptic*. Coming full speed, 33 knots.

"I have had to leave 'phones. Yes, I say I smell gunpowder here strong, and am lying on the floor. My gear beginning to fly around with concussion. Smoke W.N.W. of me. There is a man of fight on our starboard side, and the submarine is on our port side. Sub-

marine has dived. Submarine has dived."

"Report her trail at intervals."

"I hope she stops down there. It is getting hot here."

"We are coming. We are coming. Have you launched all boats?"

"Yes. Two ships coming, one abeam and one on port quarter. Don't worry. He has gone. Destroyers now alongside."

A SONG OF TWO BURDENS.

THE round brown sails were reefed and struggling home
Over the glitter and gloom of the angry deep:
Dark in the cottage she sang, "Soon, soon, he will come,
Dreamikin, Drowsy-head, sleep, my little one, sleep."

Over the glitter and gloom of the angry deep
Was it only a dream or a shadow that vanished away?
"Lullaby, little one, sleep, my little one, sleep,"
She sang in a dream as the shadows covered the day.

Was it only a sail or a shadow that vanished away?
The boats come home: there is one that will never return;
But she sang in a dream as the shadows buried the day;
And she set the supper and begged the fire to burn.

The boats come home; but one will never return;
And a strangled cry went up from the struggling sea;
She sank on her knees and begged the fire to burn,
"Burn, oh burn, for my love is coming to me!"

A strangled cry went up from the struggling sea,
A cry where the ghastly surf to the moon-dawn rolled;
Burn, oh burn; for my love is coming to me,
His hands will be scarred with the ropes and starved with the cold.

A strangled cry where the foam in the moonlight rolled,
A bitter cry from the heart of the ghastly sea;
His hands will be frozen, the night is dark and cold,
Burn, oh burn, for my love is coming to me.

One cry to God from the soul of the shuddering sea,
One moment of stifling lips and struggling hands;
Burn, oh burn; for my love is coming to me;
And oh, I think the little one understands.

One moment of stifling lips and struggling hands,
Then only the glitter and gloom of the angry deep;
And oh, I think the little one understands;
Dreamikin, Drowsy-head, sleep, my little one, sleep.

II.

II.

Two telegrams begin this winter's tale. The first, *to C. in C.E. Indies. Have you any news of the* s.s. Clan Macfarlane, *passed Malta on 27th December, bound for Port Said?* The second, *from C. in C.E. Indies.* Clan Macfarlane *has not yet arrived in Egypt.*

The *Clan Macfarlane*, of the Port of Glasgow, was a steamer of some four thousand tons, built of steel at Sunderland. She had a crew of seventy-six hands, a general cargo, and left Birkenhead on the 16th December 1915.

On the 30th of December, at 3.45 P.M.,

she was steaming at full speed, making an average of ten knots. There was a look-out in the crow's nest, and two look-outs were on the forecastle head. The weather was fine and clear. The wind was in the west, blowing moderate, with a slight sea.

The chief officer, Frederick James Hawley, had just been called, as he was to go on duty at 4 o'clock, when he felt and heard a violent explosion. He ran on deck and found the upper hatches of number five hold and the tarpaulins blown out of position. They had been battened down on leaving Liverpool.

He gave orders at once to lower the boats below the level of the harbour deck, and this was done. He then sounded number five hold, and found

eighteen inches of water. He also saw the cargo breaking up and floating out of the steamer's side. She had been struck on the starboard side, at number five hatch, below the water-line.

Hawley then personally searched the forecastles to make sure that nobody was in them. He conferred with the master; and they decided to abandon the ship, as she was beginning to settle by the stern, and it was growing dark.

At about 5.15 all hands left the steamer in six boats, and rowed clear. About 6 o'clock a submarine appeared from the southward, and fired six shots into the steamer on the port side forward. At 6.15 all the boats were made fast, astern of the master's boat, to keep them together during the night. A few

minutes later the submarine came alongside, asked for particulars of the steamer, and then steered to the eastward. After this masts were stepped, sails broken out, and a course set for Crete, which was thought to be fifty-five or sixty miles away. They sailed all night.

In the early hours of New Year's morning it fell calm. The boats were separated, and the men rowed till 10 A.M., when a light northerly wind sprang up. They set sail, and continued till 5 P.M., when the boats were all made fast again astern of the master's boat. They sailed all night.

On January the 2nd, at 8 o'clock in the morning, they made the north-east end of Crete; but the wind and sea increased, and the boats were blown to the south-

west along the coast. It was only three or four miles distant; but the heavy sea made it impossible to land.

At 10 o'clock that night the third officer's boat parted the tow-rope. The second gunner's boat was attached to this one, and they were both swallowed up in the darkness. The master's boat cast off and went in search of them. Hawley's boat lay to with the others all night waiting.

It was a terrible night. There were a good many natives of India in the boats' crews, and they suffered greatly from the exposure. One by one, in the dim light of the lanterns, pathetically as children, they gave up the fight for life, and slipped into the water that swilled about their feet. The wild eyes, always aloof from our own, flashed like the eyes

of frightened forest creatures, and their lips murmured deliriously of their distant East. Five of them died in Hawley's boat, and were lifted, dripping from the water that had been shipped, and slipped over the side into the dark sea. A sixth died in the second officer's boat.

At daybreak on the 3rd of January the master's boat was sighted, a black dot among the distant white-caps, and at about 8 o'clock he rejoined them. He told them that he had been unable to find the missing boats, and that three natives in his own boat had also died during the night.

At 4 o'clock on the afternoon of this day they decided to abandon No. 1 boat, transferring the fourth engineer (who was in charge of it), with six natives, to

Hawley's boat, and two natives to the master's boat. The wind and sea increased, and at 4.30 the rudder on the master's boat was carried away. He then made fast astern of the second officer's boat.

At 5.30 the wind and sea had increased so much that the master was forced to let go. He set a reefed jib, and at daylight on the 4th there was no sign of him. At 2 P.M. he was sighted again, sailing to the westward. Hawley set sail, and tried to follow him, but he had the second officer's boat attached, and could not get up to him. The last they saw of the master's boat was at sunset on the 4th, making about W.S.W., and finally vanishing into the evening light.

Sails were stowed, and the boats lay to. The sea anchor was used that night, and at daybreak Hawley attached a bucket to the sea anchor to increase its weight.

At 1 A.M. on the 5th it was decided to abandon No. 4 boat, and transfer the second officer, fifth engineer, and seven natives, with their food and water, to Hawley's boat. This was a perilous task in a wind and sea so boisterous, and during the process the rudder of Hawley's boat was broken and unshipped. He then used an oar, with a goose-winged jib as a jigger, to keep head to sea.

During the forenoon the wind increased to a gale, with a high, increasing sea. The boat laboured heavily and shipped water, and heavy sprays burst continually

over the men as they baled. Oil was used, and the baling went on without a break.

At noon on the 7th they sighted the smoke of a steamer on the S.E., but she drew no nearer, and the smoke died away. All this time, it must be remembered, the men were soaked from head to foot by the wintry seas. On January the 6th, at 6 o'clock, the second cook died from exposure, and the blue frozen body was dropped overboard. Half an hour later the officer's boy died, and at 9 o'clock on the same bleak morning a fireman died. The burial of these dead, the heave and brief plunge of the bodies, as they lightened the boat, were the only interruptions to the long monotony of the baling.

At 10 o'clock the wind and sea moderated a little. Hawley set a reefed lug-sail, and having decided to make for Alexandria, though it was about two hundred and fifty miles distant, he steered E.S.E. At 4.15 that afternoon another native died, and was "buried."

They sailed all night. At 5 A.M. on January the 7th the wind shifted to N.W. and freshened, and the sea increased again. At 6 o'clock the captain's boy died (having fought hard for life all through the night), and his burial left the boat still lighter.

At 7.30 A.M. they put a second reef in the lug-sail, and steered S.E. At 8 A.M. they sighted a steamer on the port bow, only about three miles distant. Cries broke from their blackened lips,

and they made signals of distress by waving some of the dead men's clothing —a coat and a shirt—on a stick.

When the steamer sighted the boats she headed for them at once, and signalled by blowing her whistle. At 8.30 they were alongside the steamer (the *Crown of Arragon*), and by 9 o'clock the diminished crews were taken aboard. They were all at the point of exhaustion.

On the *Crown of Arragon* brandy and hot coffee and dry clothes were given them. But on the way to Malta two more men died from the effects of their long exposure.

The rest was told in a few telegrams reporting the case, and asking that search should be made for the missing boats. They were never found. "Civilisation"

is very big and busy, and one telegram in reply stated, "*No ships available.*"

But grimly as this crew was thinned out, that of the *Whitgift* fared even worse. The only evidence of the attack on this ship is that of a Japanese, one of the crew, who sent a post-card to the owners (Messrs Parker, Hamilton, & Company) from a prison camp in Germany. All the rest of the crew were lost. The post-card ran as follows :—

To Miggis PALKEL, HAMILTON, & Co.

17/6/16.

DEAR SIRS,—I have written you once from Hemeln, but did not receive any answer. I am now in Lager, Holzminden, Barrack 4. On the 20/4/16 our

ship has been torpedoed by a German U-boat, and now I am a prisoner. If it is possible I would be very grateful to you if you would send from time to time a parcel and money, because all my things are lost, and I cannot write to Japan.—
Yours, IKEHATO SABURO.

The waves of this war break on every coast in the world, and the sound of them washes over every continent, bringing sorrow to the remotest ends of the earth. In the early days of the war I met an old gardener on the coast of Maine. He was a Scot by birth, but had been an American citizen for over half a century. "My son went back to Scotland," he told me, "to see some of my folks at home, and he took up mine-sweeping. He was

drowned just off Aberdeen, where I was born."

But it is almost equally dangerous for neutral seamen to engage in the humane work of bringing food to Belgium. The Greek steamer *Embiricos* was taking a cargo of maize for the Belgian Relief Committee when she was sunk by a submarine in the Channel. The crew were put into open boats at nightfall, though the weather was very stormy, with a wild rain, and the sea ran mountains high.

The Greek captain (John Palaocrassas) lost sight of the second boat (there were only two) as they were going before the wind and sea. He tried to go back and find them, but found it impossible, and went on his way, burning paraffin flares.

They saw the flash of the Lizard Light across the tumult of the storm, and a steamer passed them, "like a great hotel," with lights out. The men shouted, the captain blew his whistle, and the flare (which was about 50 candle power), must have been seen. In these waters, however, at night, a large steamer is apt to suspect the tricks of the U-boat in any unusual signals, and cannot take too many risks.

Eventually they encountered the green light of one of our heroic little Brixham trawlers, and heard the reassuring shout, "All right."

The sea was so rough, however, that it was after midnight when they were hauled aboard. They searched the sea as thoroughly as possible in that wild

weather, but the other boat with her crew of twelve Greek seamen was never seen again. So much for the German tenderness towards the kingdom of Greece.

OUR HIGHWAY.

THE same Sun is o'er us,
The same Love shall find us,
The same and none other
Wherever we be;
With the same hope before us,
The same home behind us,
England, our mother,
Ringed round with the sea.

No land in the ring of it
Now, all around us
Only the splendid
Re-surging unknown;
How should we sing of it,
This that hath found us
By the great stars attended
At midnight, alone?

Our highway none knoweth,
Yet our blood hath discerned it!
Clear, clear is our path now
Whose foreheads are free;
Where the hurricane bloweth
Our spirits have learned it,
'Tis the highway of wrath, now,
The storm's way, the sea.

When the waters lay breathless
Gazing at Hesper
Guarding that glorious
Fruitage of gold,
Heard we the deathless
Wonderful whisper
We follow, victorious
To-night, as of old.

Ah, the broad miles of it
White with the onset
Of waves without number
Warring for glee;
Ah, the soft smiles of it
Down to the sunset,
Sacred for slumber
The swan's bath, the sea!

When the breakers charged thundering
In thousands all round us
With a lightning of lances
Up-hurtled on high,
When the stout ships were sundering
A rapture hath crowned us
Like the wild light that dances
On the crests that flash by.

Our highway none knoweth,
Yet our blood hath discerned it!
Clear, clear is our path now
Whose foreheads are free;
Where Euroclydon bloweth
Our spirits have learned it,
'Tis the highway of wrath, now,
The storm's way, the sea!

Who now will follow us
Where England's flag leadeth us,
Where gold not inveigles,
Nor statesmen betray?
Tho' the deep midnight swallow us
Let her cry when she needeth us,
We return, her sea-eagles,
The hurricane's way.

For the same Sun is o'er us,
The same Love shall find us,
The same and none other
Wherever we be;
With the same hope before us,
The same home behind us,
England, our mother,
Ringed round with the sea.

III.

III.

THE victims of the "open boats" system do not all die as quickly as the women and children of the *Lusitania*, but "civilisation" is much too big and busy to keep count of the numerous obscure murders of the innocent and helpless at sea. We are told that their deaths are "unforeseeable." We are not told whether "any place of safety" had been arranged for the crew of the *Margam Abbey*, but her master was approached at Seattle, Tacoma, Panama, and Rio Janeiro by certain mysterious agents, and offered large sums of money if his

steamer never arrived in France. This is the new warfare. When he refused, he was threatened with a place of eternal safety for his own personal benefit. And Robert Louis Stevenson used to be reproached by the "crickets" for his "romantic" aloofness from the realities of our ordered life! My only criticism to-day is that Stevensonian romance, confronted, quite squarely by a contemporary, in an inn at Rio Janeiro, looks uncommonly like the bloodiest kind of murder.

One of the most curious methods of treating the crew of an attacked merchant ship is revealed in the case of the s.s. *La Belle France.* On 31st January 1916, she left Port Said for Dieppe, *viâ* Algiers, with a cargo of rape seed,

linseed, and barley from Karachi. She was unarmed, for offence or defence. All went well till 2 P.M. on the 1st of February, when, without any warning, the ship was struck by a torpedo on the starboard side in the way of the cross bunker holds. She listed heavily to starboard at once, and made much water, the hatches from No. 2 and the cross bunker holds being burst open.

All hands were promptly called to the boat stations, where the boats had already been swung out in case of attack. No. 1 lifeboat on the starboard side was then found to be broken by the concussion and useless. International lawyers may well take note of this very common aspect of these attacks on merchant shipping.

The ship was listing more and more heavily, and all hands were ordered to the port-side boats, two of which were lowered by the master and officers. The Lascar crews were ordered to keep close alongside the ship, but they became panic-stricken in the face of the new "frightfulness," and cast off from the ship without orders. The master and three other officers jumped into the boats from the deck. The chief officer, who was standing by the falls, and the chief engineer, who was stopping the engines, were left on board as the boats drifted away.

The chief officer dived overboard, and was picked up by No. 3 boat. The chief engineer, being unable to swim, remained on board till, as the vessel righted herself,

he succeeded in getting into No. 2 starboard boat, which was partly lowered. After about half an hour he was picked up by No. 3 boat.

No. 4 boat, in the meantime, had capsized. Some of the crew were swimming, and others were clinging to her bottom. The submarine rose to the surface, came alongside, and picked up these men. No. 3 boat was then called alongside the submarine by the officer in command and was ordered to stand by. The officer of the submarine took his revolver and threatened to shoot both crews if they came nearer.

At this moment, four trawlers were seen on the horizon; and the submarine, sublimely oblivious of the shivering men it had just hauled on to its deck, dived

with the whole bunch of them still standing there, and left them to flounder to the surface as best they could. Some of them were saved by No. 2 boat, but nineteen were drowned, a good many being sucked down by the diving submarine. A delay of a very few seconds, of course, would have made it possible to save them all. But the whole affair throws a curious light on the German method. It might be described as the tempering of mercy with callousness; and reminds one of the nonsense-world of Edward Lear, whose creatures regarded one another with affectionate disgust.

The most excessive caution could hardly have regarded this action as necessary to the safety of the U-boat; for the trawlers, at this time, were many

miles away, black dots on the horizon. It seems to be one of many examples of a curious whimsicality that breaks (by way of reaction perhaps) through the systematic soul of the German. He has carried his logic to the point of madness, and perhaps some law of compensation demands that it should be offset by an equally insane capriciousness. There seems to be no other explanation of the gnome-like cruelties that have crept out of his once music-haunted mountains. On one occasion, a temporarily merciful German commander kindly offered to tow some open boats, which had been damaged and were leaking badly, into a place of safety. He saw some aircraft in the distance, after the boats had been made fast, and he promptly dived with

the boats behind him, not even waiting to cast loose. It was only after a frantic struggle and wild hacking with knives at tangled ropes in blind whirlpools, that these men escaped with their lives. There is, no doubt, a certain grotesque humour about this, from the German point of view; but, when nineteen lives are lost, and nineteen homes desolated, the laugh can hardly be a very hearty one, even in the cities of the new civilisation.

It becomes more and more difficult, however, in a world-war that seems to have grown too big for the human intellect, to keep more than a few of the facts before us at one time. One finds, over and over again, well-meaning people who shudder at these hideous

aspects of the matter, but are content to regard them as a part of the new "sea warfare." They are unable to retain, apparently, more than half a dozen ideas simultaneously — unable to realise that all this has no relation whatsoever to "warfare": that these men were non-combatants on merchant ships, and that, in a great many cases, they were the citizens and the ships of neutral countries. Nobody who can retain all these facts simultaneously can come to any other conclusion than that the charge is one of wilful murder on the high seas. Undoubtedly, our world has grown too big for us.

It is difficult to imagine what must be the sensations of some of these merchant seaman, men who have been occupying

their business in fishing or coasting trade, and suddenly find themselves menaced by all these strange new devilries. Sometimes the menace is as weird and unexpected as a descent of squadrons from another planet. The *Franz Fischer*, more or less on her guard against attack from the sea, was surprised by an attack from the skies of a quite new kind.

The *Franz Fischer* was a coasting trader of about 970 gross tons. She left Hartlepool for Cowes, with a cargo of coal, on the 31st of January 1916. She was unarmed.

About 9.30 P.M. on the 1st of February the ship was informed by a torpedo-boat that there were floating mines ahead. James Henry Birch, the chief engineer, said that at this time the weather was

very fine, with no wind or sea, but it was black dark. The engines were working full speed ahead, and the ship would be about 16 miles N.N.E. of the Kentish Knock. The master hailed him through the engine-room skylight, told him of the warning, and said he had decided to anchor. The ship anchored at about 10 o'clock, and had two white anchor lights burning. The chief engineer went on deck to the cabin, which was amidships, to see the master.

While they were sitting in the cabin talking, they heard a faint noise of aircraft. The mate, who had just come off the bridge, called to them through the partition from his own cabin, asking them if they heard it. The master replied, "Yes, what is it?" The mate said he

did not know; but, whatever it was, it was coming from the south-east. The sound then appeared to die away; but, in about two minutes, it became deafening. They got up to see what it was, and went through the short alley-way towards the deck. Just as Birch opened the door leading on to the deck there was a terrific explosion, and the master and himself were knocked down back into the cabin, partly by the concussion and partly by a great mass of sea-water which had been heaved up by the explosion. When they were on their feet again they found they were soaking wet.

The ship steadied after the concussion, and everything seemed all right for a few moments. Birch rushed to the engine-room to call "All hands on deck";

but, just as he got there, the second mate, second engineer, steward, donkey-men, and mess-room boy came on deck. They were all nearly naked, as they had been roused from sleep.

By this time the ship was taking a heavy list to port. Birch and some of the crew hurried round to the starboard lifeboat, where some of the remainder were already assembled. One sailor was in the lifeboat, which was swung out ready for lowering. The ship was rapidly falling over to port. Her funnel was still intact, but it was too dark to see if the masts were standing.

In a few more seconds all the men were half-way to the bottom of the sea, fighting for life in a black whirlpool. The ship had sunk like a stone.

When Birch came gasping to the surface, he looked round for any wreckage that might be floating, and saw the lifebelt box which had stood on the bridge. He managed to get hold of this. Others of the crew swam up, until about eight naked men were hanging on to the "reasonable place of safety" which had been so thoughtfully provided for them.

The scene that followed in the pitch-black sea was a somewhat ghastly one. Some of the men tried to climb on top of the box, with the result that it rolled over; and, when it righted, several of them were missing. These panic-stricken efforts to climb out of the water — a common occurrence in such cases with men who are not practised swimmers,

and many sailors are not—were repeated with horrible insistence; and each time the box rolled over, and rose with fewer men, gulping and clutching and cursing. At last Birch swam away from the box, as the best way of saving his own life. He found a lifebelt, which he put round him as best he could, and managed to keep afloat. After a time he lost consciousness, and when he recovered he was in a lifeboat belonging to the Belgian steamer *Paul*. The steward and another sailor were also in the boat. They were taken aboard the *Paul* and given dry clothes and hot coffee about 8 o'clock in the morning; but in their one night of horror they must have lived considerably more than the allotted span of life.

This attack on an unarmed ship at

anchor, had undoubtedly been made by a Zeppelin. One of the men on the bridge said afterwards that the aircraft seemed to be circling overhead in the darkness, dropping closer and closer to the vessel, like a great night-hawk, attracted by the white anchor-lights. It grew much louder than an aeroplane—more like "several express trains all crossing a bridge together"; and at its loudest it was impossible to hear a man shout. Then there came a sudden silence, followed by the terrific explosion, which flung the men about and dazed them.

It would be interesting to know how Germany would reconcile this attack with her well-known regard for international

law. Possibly it was a "mistake." She may have mistaken a ship, with so German a name, for a fortfied city like Scarborough, or perhaps for a cathedral in disguise.

A KNIGHT OF THE OCEAN-SEA.

Sir Humphrey Gilbert, hard of hand,
Knight-in-chief of the Ocean-sea,
Gazed from the rocks of his New Found Land
And thought of the home where his heart would be.

He gazed across the wintry waste
That weltered and hissed like molten lead,—
"He saileth twice who saileth in haste!
I'll wait the favour of Spring," he said.

Ever the more, ever the more,
He heard the winds and the waves roar!
Thunder on thunder shook the shore.

The yellow clots of foam went by
  Like shavings that curl from a ship-
    wright's plane,
Clinging and flying, afar and nigh,
  Shuddering, flying and clinging again.

A thousand bubbles in every one
  Shifted and shimmered with rainbow
    gleams;
But—had they been planets and stars that
    spun,
  He had let them drift by his feet like
    dreams:

Heavy of heart was our Admirall,
  For, out of his ships,—and they were
    but three!—

He had lost the fairest and most tall,
And—he was a Knight of the Ocean-sea.

Ever the more, ever the more,
He heard the winds and the waves roar!
Thunder on thunder shook the shore.

Heavy of heart, heavy of heart,
For she was a galleon mighty as May,
And the storm that ripped her glory apart
Had stripped his soul for the winter's way;

And he was aware of a whisper blown
From foc'sle to poop, from windward to lee,
That the fault was his, and his alone,
And—he was a Knight of the Ocean-sea.

"Had he done that! Had he done this!"
And yet his mariners loved him well;
But an idle word is hard to miss,
And the foam hides more than the deep can tell.

And the deep had buried his best-loved books,
With many a hard-won chart and plan:
And a king that is conquered must see strange looks,
So bitter a thing is the heart of man!

And—"Whom will you find to pay your debt?
For a venture like this is a costly thing!
Will they stake yet more, tho' your heart be set
On the mightier voyage you planned for the spring?"

He raised his head like a Viking crowned,—
"I'll take my old flag to her Majestie,
And She will lend me ten thousand pound
To make her Queen of the Ocean-sea!"

Ever the more, ever the more,
He heard the winds and the waves roar!
Thunder on thunder shook the shore.

Outside—they heard the great winds blow!
Outside—the blustering surf they heard,
And the bravest there would ha' blanched to know
That they must be taken at their own word.

For the great grim waves were as molten lead
—And he had two ships who sailed with three!—
"And I sail not home till the spring," he said,
"They are all too frail for the Ocean-sea."

But the trumpeter thought of an ale-house bench,
And the cabin-boy longed for a Devonshire lane,
And the gunner remembered a green-gowned wench,
And the foc'sle whisper went round again,—

"Sir Humphrey Gilbert is hard of hand,
But his courage went down with the ship, may-be,

And we wait for the Spring in a desert land,
For—*he is afraid of the Ocean-sea.*"

Ever the more, ever the more,
He heard the winds and the waves roar!
Thunder on thunder shook the shore.

He knew, he knew how the whisper went!
He knew he must master it, last or first!
He knew not how much or how little it meant;
But his heart was heavy and like to burst.

"Up with your sails, my sea-dogs all!
The wind has veered! And my ships," quoth he,
"They will serve for a British Admirall
Who is Knight-in-chief of the Ocean-sea!"

His will was like a North-east wind
That swept along our helmless crew;
But he would not stay on the *Golden Hind*,
For that was the stronger ship of the two.

"My little ship's company, lads, hath passed
Perils and storms a-many with me!
Would ye have me forsake them at the last?
They'll need a Knight of the Ocean-sea!"

Ever the more, ever the more,
We heard the winds and the waves roar!
Thunder on thunder shook the shore.

Beyond Cape Race, the pale sun splashed
The grim grey waves with silver light
Where, ever in front, his frigate crashed
Eastward, for England and the night.

And still as the dark began to fall,
Ever in front of us, running free,
We saw the sails of our Admirall
Leading us home through the Ocean-sea.

Ever the more, ever the more,
We heard the winds and the waves roar!
But he sailed on, sailed on before.

On Monday at noon of the third fierce day
A-board our *Golden Hind* he came,
With a trail of blood, marking his way
On the salt wet decks as he walked half-lame.

For a rusty nail thro' his foot had pierced.
"Come, master-surgeon, mend it for me;
Though I would it were changed for the nails that amerced
The dying thief upon Calvary."

The surgeon bathed and bound his foot,
And the master entreated him sore to stay;
But roughly he pulled on his great sea-boot
With—"The wind is rising and I must away!"

I know not why so little a thing,
When into his pinnace we helped him down,
Should make our eyelids prick and sting
As the salt spray were into them blown;

But he called as he went—"Keep watch and steer
By my lanthorn at night!" Then he waved his hand
With a kinglier watch-word, "We are as near
To heaven, my lads, by sea as by land!"

Ever the more, ever the more,
We heard the gathering tempest roar!
But he sailed on, sailed on before.

Three hundred leagues on our homeward road,
We strove to signal him, swooping nigh,
That he would ease his decks of their load
Of nettings and fights and artillery.

And dark and dark that night 'gan fall,
And high the muttering breakers swelled,
Till that strange fire which seamen call
"Castor and Pollux," we beheld,

An evil sign of peril and death,
Burning pale on the high main-mast;
But calm with the might of Gennesareth
Our Admirall's voice went ringing past,

Clear thro' the thunders, far and clear,
Mighty to counsel, clear to command,
Joyfully ringing, "We are as near
To heaven, my lads, by sea as by land!"

Ever the more, ever the more,
We heard the rising hurricane roar!
But he sailed on, sailed on before.

And over us fled the fleet of the stars,
And, ever in front of us, far or nigh,
The lanthorn on his cross-tree spars
Dipped to the Pit or soared to the Sky!

'Twould sweep to the lights of Charles's Wain,
As the hills of the deep 'ud mount and flee,
Then swoop down vanishing cliffs again
To the thundering gulfs of the Ocean-sea.

We saw it shine as it swooped from the height,
With ruining breakers on every hand,
Then—a cry came out of the black midnight,
As near to heaven by sea as by land!

And the light was out! Like a wind-
blown spark,
All in a moment! And we—and we—
Prayed for his soul as we swept thro' the
dark;
For he was a Knight of the Ocean-sea.

Over our fleets for evermore
The winds 'ull triumph and
the waves roar!
But he sails on, sails on before!

IV.

IV.

"THE last we saw of the captain's boat was . . ." "They drifted away. We never saw them again. . . ."

This is the burden of a hundred tales, true tales that are so plain and simple that I believe very few people realise their meaning. It seems inconceivable otherwise that a civilised world should allow the sickening work to continue, as it does, day after day and night after night, in this bleak winter, a work of murder against unarmed men on the high seas. "Open boats!" What a mockery is that safeguard in the face of the

Lusitania outrage. But the mockery does not stir the world. Our civilisation has neither eyes to see nor ears to hear, unless the case be a very large and sensational one. How many people have heard, for instance, of the *Tringa?* She was a ship of over 2000 tons, and carried a crew of only twenty-five men. What are twenty-five men to civilisation? To German civilisation they are less important than cat's meat. As for the neutral world, the cries of drowning men must come from at least 1500 throats in order to be heard at all. Undoubtedly our civilisation has grown too big for us, and no human cry will halt a wheel of it.

On a certain cold November day the crew of the *Tringa* saw the wake of a torpedo pass under her stern. Immedi-

ately afterwards a submarine appeared on her starboard quarter about 400 yards away. She opened fire at once on the unarmed ship. This is the narrative of one of the crew :—

"We blew three blasts on the whistle to indicate that we were trying to stop the ship, but she still continued to fire. One shot crashed right through the crew's quarters. We immediately lowered three boats, and got all the crew away from the ship. The U-boat circled round to the port side, and still continued to fire at the ship. She passed close to the boats while she was firing, and fragments of the ship fell among them. The last shot caused a heavy explosion. The ship went down shortly afterwards, stern first."

The submarine was painted a dirty

white, and was flying the Austrian flag. Three men were on the platform, and one in the conning-tower. Having done her worst she disappeared, without troubling about the human derelicts.

"The weather was very bad," continues one of the survivors, "and a high sea was running. We drifted for forty-two hours in the open boat, baling continually, for we were shipping heavy seas. The last we saw of the captain, in the life-boat with thirteen men, was on Friday evening at 5.30. He was drifting to eastward.

"We were picked up by a steamer at eight o'clock on Sunday morning.

"The last we saw . . ." is not the last glimpse of the mind's eye, however, for those who have the heart to picture the last agonies of the missing men.

A Roman poet once declared that it was pleasant to stand in safety upon the shore and watch others battling for life with the waves. One fears that there must have been a Prussian streak in Lucretius, but the sentiment, in a less extreme form, is common to humanity. Certainly it is pleasant to all men to see an enemy battling with the waves of his own anger, especially when he is the commander of a U-boat.

The *Chantala* was an unarmed British ship, and she was torpedoed without warning. The crew had all taken to the boats. It was hazy weather, with a long swell, a light breeze, and what sailors call "low visibility." The boats lay to for nearly an hour without sighting the submarine, and as the ship had

not yet shown signs of sinking, the master decided to return to her. The U-boat, however, was evidently watching them like a lynx—an easy matter with a periscope that is almost invisible at a few hundred yards' distance. As soon as the master's boat began to pull towards the ship, there was "a whizzing noise," and a shell passed overhead, striking the water very near them. Then the submarine appeared, about a mile away, rushing up at full speed. The boat was stopped at once, but four more rounds were fired directly at her, narrowly missing her. The submarine then fired ten rounds at the ship, seven of which crashed into the stern.

It was evidently a highly excitable submarine, for she broke off this amuse-

ment abruptly and came tearing for the boats, with her commander bellowing, "Where's your captain? Come on board, you English dog! You murderer! You bastard!"

The master got his boat alongside, and the German commander swore at his own men, struck them, and kicked them for not fending her off properly. The master was then told to come to the conning-tower, which he did. There the submarine captain caught him by the throat, threatening to hang him, and using very foul language. One of the sailors described him as "a short man, with fair hair, a glassy eye, clean shaven, and about as foul-mouthed as a pig-sty."

The submarine captain said that his brother had been murdered by the *Bara-*

long; but it was more than likely that he never had a brother, for he was apparently ready to say anything that came into his head, with a decided preference for what was violently untrue. It is a mood well known to psychologists, and to every judge in the criminal courts. It is the way of the weak man seeking to impress or terrorise those who are temporarily in his power.

He asked the master the name of his ship, and her port of departure. The German did not deny the name of the ship, but when the master named the port of "London," he replied — "You dirty dog, I know you called at Plymouth." Probably he had been reading of the exploits of Devonshire seamen. He then abused the master at more

length, took three snapshots of him, and ordered him back to his boat. The natives in the boat's crew began salaaming to the submarine commander, who returned the compliment by spitting at them, and calling them "dirty black dogs."

The submarine then sent a boat to the ship, and after looting her of a considerable amount of portable property, including a crate of prize fowls, they sank her with time-fuse bombs. The crew of the *Chantala* were left in their open boats, eighteen miles from land. But in this case only the eight seamen who were killed by the first unexpected explosion lost their lives. The "only eight," however, is commentary enough on the present state of civilisation, and the importance of international law.

43453

The brutality of the open-boat system of dealing with passengers and crews of merchant ships is well illustrated by the case of the *Chic.* On 13th April the *Chic* was about forty-five miles south-west of the Fastnet Lighthouse, in the Atlantic Ocean. There was a strong westerly breeze, and a confused sea, in which small open boats could not be launched without great risk to life. A submarine suddenly appeared on the starboard side, and began shelling the ship, which was unarmed. She stopped at once, and the crew were ordered to abandon her.

An effort was made to lower the port lifeboat, but it was caught by a sea and lifted quite slack in the blocks. On release, when the sea subsided, it dropped

heavily. The after-gear was carried away. The carpenter, who was entangled in the rope, was nearly strangled. A seaman named Creighton, who was in the boat, was flung into the water, well clear of the ship. A lifebuoy was thrown to him, but he was heavily clothed, probably wearing sea-boots, and he was drowned. The boat rapidly filled. Efforts were made to bale her, but she was found to be too badly damaged to be seaworthy.

The submarine, however, was not concerned with these trivial matters of our common humanity. She was concerned with great things, like the impersonal movement of the stars, the destiny of Germany, and the God who is undoubtedly "mit uns." She was now on the

port side of the ship, with her conning-tower and part of her body showing. They were painted an "invisible green." The conning-tower, the engineer of the *Chic* noted, had four brass cylinders. She dipped and appeared again several times in quick succession, and at about 11.30, when she was submerged, there was a dull thudding explosion, and the *Chic* vibrated with sounds of escaping steam. Volumes of steam and smoke poured from the engine-room, stokehold, ventilators, and all entrances. The ship heeled to starboard, and a huge mass of green water washed over the lower deck from port to starboard.

The ship seemed to be sinking. The second engineer jumped into the water and was picked up by the starboard life-

boat, in which there were sixteen other men. She pulled clear and waited for the jolly-boat, which had been lowered, with about eight men in her. The submarine had now done her duty, apparently, and had finally disappeared.

The second engineer described the result of this abominable crime as follows, and I give it as nearly as possible in his own words:—

"The captain, in the jolly-boat, hailed us, telling us to get out our sea anchor and come closer, so that he could put a navigating officer aboard. The second officer, who had the necessary instruments in his case, prepared to come aboard the lifeboat, but owing to the heavy sea the first attempt very nearly led to a bad collision, and the jolly-boat

was forced to stand off. They had their sea anchor out, and we were told to drift with them. Verbal communication from boat to boat was impossible owing to the boisterous weather, and as it was impossible to pull against the sea we drifted, according to the captain's last orders, taking care at every opportunity to keep them in sight, so that we should not be parted.

"It was clear that we were making more way than the captain's boat; but knowing that they were in a position to come up to us, we took it for granted that the captain had some purpose in view. The distance increased till we had some difficulty in seeing them, but whenever they rose to sight on the

crests they seemed to be riding the sea well: they showed no signals. The last we saw of the captain's boat was about 3 P.M. She was then about three-quarters of a mile away. At this time the weather was very rough, the sea confused, and we were shipping much water. We had a consultation, and decided not to alter our course till darkness set in, trusting that the weather would abate, or that the other boat would come up to us, and that we should be able to communicate. Darkness set in about 7.30 and we hove to. Nothing further was seen of the captain's boat. Eventually we set sail and struck a course in the hope of making the South of Ireland. We saw one ship's light

but did not hail her. The next morning, about 8 A.M., we were taken aboard the s.s. *Glengariff.*"

Could anything illustrate more completely the chaotic brutality of the present defiance of international law at sea? It is simply a tale of murder, foul and unnatural, a most damning indictment of the new German civilisation. The Allies are fighting the criminal. I do not see how neutrals can fail, at least, to pass their moral judgment upon him. If they do not do so openly there are only two explanations. The first is that they do so secretly, but the German "frightfulness" has muzzled them. The second is that a great part of the human race has

terribly deceived itself about its own character. No contempt can be too complete for the perpetrators of this outrage against every chivalrous instinct that has ever found a brief lodging in the unhappy heart of man.

A SONG OF ENGLAND.

THERE is a song of England that none shall ever sing;
So sweet it is and fleet it is
That none whose words are not as fleet as birds upon the wing,
And regal as her mountains,
And radiant as the fountains
Of rainbow-coloured sea-spray that every wave can fling
Against the cliffs of England, the sturdy cliffs of England,
Could more than seem to dream of it,
Or catch one flying gleam of it,
Above the seas of England that never cease to sing.

There is a song of England that only lovers know;
So rare it is and fair it is,
O, like a fairy rose it is upon a drift of snow,
So cold and sweet and sunny,
So full of hidden honey,
So like a flight of butterflies where rose and lily blow
Along the lanes of England, the leafy lanes of England;
When flowers are at their vespers
And full of little whispers,
The boys and girls of England shall sing it as they go.

There is a song of England that only love may sing,
So sure it is and pure it is;

And seaward with the sea-mew it spreads
a whiter wing,
And with the sky-lark hovers
Above the tryst of lovers,
Above the kiss and whisper that led the
lovely Spring
Through all the glades of England, the
ferny glades of England,
Until the way enwound her
With sprays of May, and crowned
her
With stars of frosty blossom in a merry
morris-ring.

There is a song of England that haunts
her hours of rest:
The calm of it and balm of it

Are breathed from every hedgerow that blushes to the West:

From the cottage doors that nightly

Cast their welcome out so brightly

On the lanes where laughing children are lifted and caressed

By the tenderest hands in England, hard and blistered hands of England:

And from the restful sighing

Of the sleepers that are lying

With the arms of God around them on the night's contented breast.

There is a song of England that wanders on the wind;

So sad it is and glad it is

That men who hear it madden and their eyes are wet and blind,
For the lowlands and the highlands
Of the unforgotten islands,
For the Islands of the Blesséd and the rest they cannot find
As they grope in dreams to England and the love they left in England;
Little feet that danced to meet them
And the lips that used to greet them,
And the watcher at the window in the home they left behind.

There is a song of England that thrills the beating blood
With burning cries and yearning

Tides of hidden aspiration hardly known
or understood;
Aspirations of the creature
Tow'rds the unity of Nature;
Sudden chivalries revealing whence the
longing is renewed
In the men that live for England, live and
love and die for England:
By the light of their desire
They shall blindly blunder
higher,
To a wider, grander Kingdom and a
deeper, nobler Good.

There is a song of England that only
heaven can hear;
So gloriously victorious,

It soars above the choral stars that sing
the Golden Year;
Till even the cloudy shadows
That wander o'er her meadows
In silent purple harmonies declare His
glory there,
Along the hills of England, the billowy
hills of England;
While heaven rolls and ranges
Through all the myriad changes
That mirror God in music to the mortal
eye and ear.

There is a song of England that none shall
ever sing,
So sweet it is and fleet it is

That none whose words are not as fleet as
birds upon the wing,
And regal as her mountains
And radiant as her fountains
Of rainbow-coloured sea-spray that every
wave can fling
Against the cliffs of England, the sturdy
cliffs of England,
Could more than seem to dream
of it,
Or catch one flying gleam of it,
Above the seas of England that never
cease to sing.

V.

V.

THE attitude of the Central Powers towards the open boat murders is an entirely cynical one. Enough has already been said to show that in the very nature of things there can be no foreseen security for passengers and crews consigned to open boats many miles out of sight of land. And this is the cynical method of imposing upon credulous landsmen adopted by the Central Powers.

NOTE VERBALE.

VIENNA, 25/9/16.

The Imperial and Royal Ministry of Foreign Affairs has the honour to bring

the following information received from the Imperial and Royal Ministry of War, Naval Division, to the knowledge of the American Embassy :—

"The steamer *Windermere* was sunk by mechanical devices, by a detached crew from an Austro-Hungarian submarine, after the steamer's crew had left the ship in well-equipped lifeboats.

"Nothing further is known to the Imperial and Royal authorities about the crew's fate.

"In view of the fact that at the critical time there was fine weather, only a slight breeze and a moderate sea, any accident the boat might have met with would, in the opinion

of the Imperial and Royal Ministry of War, Naval Division, have to be ascribed to an event not to be foreseen."

In other words, the Central Powers deliberately reason from incomplete premises. This, in fact, is the explanation throughout of the amazing German logic. You can prove anything you like if you are allowed to choose your own premises. It is the main danger of logic in the complicated modern world. Hardly ever can you get a complete statement of the factors in any political or social or philosophic problem. This is probably the reason for the success of the illogical British attitude towards all these matters. We

can never accept any —ism as the whole truth, because we know instinctively that the last word can never be said by mortal man on any subject of this kind. But we must assume that in the last result the dice are loaded on the side of the angels in favour of righteousness, and that there is an eternal basis for the right.

There is no way out of the chaos which "Agnosticism" has been preparing for our civilisation but a return to at least this irreducible minimum of a creed. Otherwise, the deluge will indeed follow.

Germany has proved that customs and conventions are valueless without some fundamental sanction.

The "unforeseen event" in the case of the *Windermere* came about thus:—

She was a steamer bound from Tyne Dock to Savona, in Italy, with a cargo of coal. When she left Gibraltar the weather, as the Imperial and Royal magnificoes asserted, was clear and fine. The wind was in the east, blowing slightly, with a smooth sea.

At 4.30 in the afternoon she was making about eight knots, when an unknown steamer was sighted on the western horizon about six miles away; and the report of a gun was heard.

The chief officer, John Fergusson, saw through his glasses that there was a submarine about two miles distant between himself and the steamer. He

called the master from the chart-room, and he ordered the helm to be put hard a-port. The U-boat then fired a shell, which passed about twenty yards a-starboard.

The ship was stopped, and all hands were ordered to the boats, but another shell was fired while they were actually engaged in this. Fergusson and eleven men got into number one lifeboat, while the master and eleven men got into the other.

By this time the submarine was close at hand, and one of her officers asked for the master, who stood up in the boat. The officer asked various questions about the ship, and eventually gave the master the course to Port Mahon. The master asked the dis-

tance, and was told that it was about forty miles.

Now every sailor knows, unless he be an Imperial and Royal magnifico of the Naval Division of the Austrian Ministry of War, that nothing can be "foreseen" about the fate of open boats forty miles from land.

The chief officer's boat made more headway than the master's. Her sail was larger, and three times she turned in order to keep company with him.

Arthur Bruce, the second engineer, gave the following account of the unforeseeable :—

> "The third time we stopped the master said to the mate, 'Keep more to the south.' After that we

did not get into speaking distance, and we saw her light for the last time about 11 P.M. She was apparently following the same course as ourselves.

"We held on our course till we sighted Majorca about noon on the following day, and ran past the lighthouse point into a small bay (Las Sabinas). We landed on the beach, and were taken to an inn, where we had supper and slept."

The rest was telegrams from anxious relatives to the owners and from the owners to the Admiralty—these curiously pleading telegrams in which the human emotion is expressed unconsciously by the pathetic implication that those in

authority may somehow change bad news into good.

> "We do hope that you will soon send us news of missing boat. Relatives anxious."
>
> "We sincerely trust that——"

But the "unforeseeable" had happened. The missing boat was never found, though six feluccas were despatched to search for her, and there was nothing left to telegraph but "Our deep regret."

The sea keeps her secrets well.

The plea of "unforeseeable" is, of course, vitiated by the plain fact that hundreds of men have been forced to fight with every known danger of the sea in their "open boats." The crew of

the *Scottish Monarch*, a small ship, with a cargo of sugar, could certainly foresee something of the fate that was in store for them when they were attacked by a U-boat about forty miles south from the Ballycotton Light.

After four rounds of shell from the pursuing submarine, which holed the ship on the port side, the master stopped the engines and ordered all hands to the boats, which were successfully launched. The master at first refused to leave the ship, and remained on the bridge, while the submarine continued firing at her till she began to sink.

The chief officer then asked permission by signs to take off the master, and the enemy ceased firing until this was done.

When the master left her the decks of the *Scottish Monarch* were awash.

The master and nineteen of the crew were in one boat and ten of the crew were in the other. The two boats kept together till dark, but at 8.40 the chief officer's boat capsized owing to the choppy sea, and sight of the other boat was lost in the confusion. All hands, after a struggle, managed to regain the boat, but she remained full of water, with her tanks adrift. Before midnight she had again capsized three times, and the reader may imagine for himself what scenes were enacted in that lonely darkness of wind and sea.

Only four hands out of the fifteen were left at the end of the third desperate struggle. They were the mate, the car-

penter, and two seamen. They saw one or two vessels in the early morning, but their only means of signalling was a handkerchief on a stick, and they were not noticed.

The boat was battered to and fro like a cockle-shell in the smoking seas, and about eight o'clock in the morning the two seamen became too exhausted to cling on. They were slowly washed overboard. Their faces and hands swirled up once or twice in the foam, and then disappeared.

At five o'clock on that day, after long hours of struggle, the mate, who was sitting aft, gradually dropped into the water in the bottom of the boat, and died there. The carpenter was now the only survivor. All that he endured in the long following

night and day, with the dead man washing to and fro at his feet, and the dead face looking up at him through the bubbling water, can only be imagined. He says that "nothing particular" happened.

At nightfall on the next day, more than twenty-four hours later—twenty-four hours of lonely battering and slow starvation—he and the dead body were picked up by a Grimsby trawler and landed at St Ives. Nothing was ever heard of the other boat. But from what we know we can conjecture what happened.

It is a tale to rouse the whole civilised world, if any civilisation were left. For these were non-combatants on a small ship, entirely unarmed for offence or defence, and carrying only a cargo of sugar.

But the most amazing tale of all is perhaps that of the *Coquette*. The crew were forced to abandon her in two open boats by a submarine, which first looted the ship and then sank her. (She was a steamer of 4000 tons, carrying salt.) The master protested against being set adrift in boats which had been damaged and were leaking badly.

There were seventeen men in the master's boat, and fourteen in that of the chief officer. They lost touch with one another after the second night, and the master's boat drifted for six days and nights. Finally it made land at Ras Hamanas, in North Africa. Two stokers were despatched along the coast to look for help, and soon after they had gone the other fifteen shipwrecked

men were attacked by Bedouin Arabs. The master said that the Arabs appeared to have a queer chivalry of their own. They shot chiefly at the two biggest men, severely wounding himself and another. Three men, however, were killed, and ten were taken as prisoners into the interior, and held to ransom. A flying column was despatched in search of them, and eventually the ten survivors reached England.

But the chief officer's boat was never heard of again. It was an open boat, and its loss was due, no doubt, to events that could not be foreseen.

It is obvious, however, that if civilisation is not to sink beneath the contempt of the ape, some foresight will have to be exercised by those who

are responsible for the maintenance of international law.

It is also obvious that the success of the U-boat is almost entirely confined to its attacks upon unarmed merchant ships, and very frequently neutral ships. How many times have we heard of their success in real sea warfare? This is the heart of the whole matter, and it requires the most urgent consideration.

PRINTED BY WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS.

Works of Alfred Noyes

"No man who is a master of such rhetoric can be disregarded. . . . There is a sustained inspiration and a finished craftsmanship to which few modern poets can attain. Mr Noyes's verse is full of the essential quality of high poetry, and, greatly daring, he has greatly succeeded." — *Spectator.*

TALES OF THE MERMAID TAVERN.

Third Impression. Crown 8vo, 6s. net.

Daily Telegraph.—"Splendid and virile.....scaling the Olympian heights as real poetry."

The World.—"Among the finest achievements in English poetry that the present generation has welcomed. A poet of exceptional calibre and of surely ripening genius."

The Times.—"It is a *tour de force*, consisting of a series of *tours de force*, in a *genre* of which Mr Noyes is past-master."

Mr James Douglas in 'The Star.'—"That is great and goodly poetry, with the fiery tumult of living romance in its rushing pictures and its moving sounds."

Westminster Gazette.—"Mr Noyes pours out colour, music, rhapsody, as clouds of April pour down rain. Just as we would like to suppose it flowered in a heightened reality—no more and no less—this amazing assemblage of the immortals flowers in his hands."

Daily Chronicle.—"In this case it is a pleasure to be a critic, for Mr Noyes has produced a work so passionately lively and of an ecstasy so homely that it deserves to be read by people who do not know a laureate from a laurel."

COLLECTED POEMS.

Two Volumes, Crown 8vo, 10s. net.
Volumes sold separately, 5s. net each.

VOL. I.	*VOL. II.*
THE LOOM OF YEARS.	DRAKE: AN ENGLISH EPIC.
THE FLOWER OF OLD JAPAN.	ENCHANTED ISLAND.
FOREST OF WILD THYME	NEW POEMS.
FORTY SINGING SEAMEN.	

FORTY SINGING SEAMEN.

Second Edition. Crown 8vo, 5s. net.

Daily Telegraph.—"Mr Alfred Noyes is one of those younger poets of the day whose work makes us look with confidence to the future of poetry. He has at once the richness and the daring of youth, and though here and there in rhythm or epithet he reminds us of the great masters, he has so markedly the qualities of spontaneity and individuality that he may be looked to to carry on worthily the tradition of our great line of singers. The 'echoes' are such as we must always expect in the earlier work of the master of any art. Mr Noyes has made himself laureate of 'our heritage the sea'—is he not greatly daring in giving us a full epic on the subject of Drake?—and in his new volume, besides the title-poem, he has other pieces inspired by this peculiarly national subject. Lyrics, narrative and patriotic poems, make up the volume."

THE ENCHANTED ISLAND,
AND OTHER POEMS.

Crown 8vo, 5s. net.

THE WINE-PRESS.

A TALE OF WAR.

Crown 8vo, 4s. 6d. net.

Westminster Gazette.—"The poet here sounds depths only possible to a master."

THE FOREST OF WILD THYME.

Illustrated in Colour by CLAUDE A. SHEPPERSON.

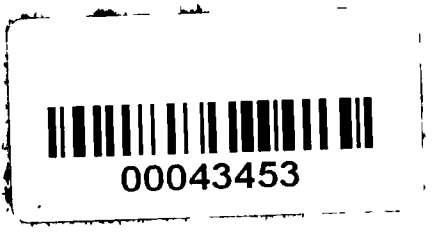
Small 4to, 6s. net. Velvet Calf Edition, 10s. 6d. net.

Mr R. C. Lehmann in 'The Bookman.'—"It is with an eager zest, the outcome of his previous experience, that a reader who loves poetry turns to a new volume by Mr Alfred Noyes. Mr Noyes is still a very young man, but it is not too much to say that by his three volumes, 'The Loom of Years,' 'The Flower of Old Japan,' and 'Poems,' not to speak of his incidental work in 'Blackwood's Magazine' and elsewhere, he has already established his right to a foremost place amongst the few to whom we can look, not so much to re-establish (the necessity for that has not yet arisen) as to revivify the great traditions of English poetry."

A TALE OF OLD JAPAN.

Illustrated by Miss KATE RICHES. 2s. net.

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS,
EDINBURGH AND LONDON.


00043453

Digitized with financial assistance from

H T Parekh FOUNDATION

An Initiative by HDFC WITH YOU, RIGHT THROUGH

on 15 October, 2018